FWIS 155: Growing Pains

Spring 2020
Gibbs Rec Center 220
2:00-2:50pm (Section 01)
3:00-3:50pm (Section 02)

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Welcome to FWIS 155! This first-year writing intensive seminar focuses on stories of adolescence and early adulthood, stories that look at the process of growing up and the obstacles we encounter along the way. We'll examine literature and film from a variety of voices, time periods, and places, and we'll also reflect on our own growing pains and coming-of-age stories. We'll also look at how the literary genre of coming-of-age stories—also known as the *bildungsroman*—has experienced its own growing pains over the centuries. Ultimately, the goal is that exploring this topic will help us better understand ourselves and the larger world beyond our own experiences.

The rest of this syllabus will offer more details about our academic goals, the assignments will complete along the way, and my expectations as your professor. I've tried to anticipate the questions you might have about the course. If you ever have a question related to this class, check the syllabus first. (And if you ever have a question that *isn't* answered by this syllabus, feel free to ask me at any time.) So let's get to the questions:

1. *What will we learn this semester by exploring our course topic? What will we be able to do with this knowledge?*

By the end of the semester, students in this course should be able to…
- Articulate a general understanding of the coming-of-age story/*bildungsroman* as a genre and the ways in which this term has been contested, critiqued, and expanded over time
- Make convincing and well-supported arguments about how a specific text challenges, complicates, or subverts the traditional *bildungsroman* or coming-of-age story
- Demonstrate close reading skills with literary and cinematic texts to offer insights about our course topic
- Formulate an argument using primary and scholarly sources that challenges or complicates common scholarly claims made about Austen's *Emma*
- Develop the ability to use literature and film as a vehicle for self-critique and reflection

2. What about the "FWIS" part of this class? What does that mean? Will we be writing a lot in this class? What's the point of FWIS, anyway?

This is a writing intensive seminar, so yes: we will be writing a lot. You'll be doing lots of low-stakes (i.e. ungraded or completion grade) writing, in and out of class, and you'll be writing and revising four essays of various lengths and genres. All of this writing work towards the overall goal of this course, which is the same goal of all FWIS courses: to help

you develop and improve your reading, writing and oral communication skills, and particularly the specific skills you need to communicate effectively in academic life.

If you think of yourself as a "bad" writer, don't worry: this course will meet you where you are and try to offer you plenty of tools to help you improve. If you think of yourself as a strong writer, this course will probably offer you the gift of humility by reminding you that every piece of writing always has room for improvement. You probably already recognize that communication in general is an essential part of success in any academic field, any job, and pretty much in all aspects of our lives. And that's ultimately why this course matters: it offers you a chance to become a more effective communicator.

With all of this in mind, the FWIS program has some major objectives that we want every FWIS course, and every student, to accomplish. You might want to think of these as "process" goals, since most of these goals focus on the various processes we can use to be successful academic writers, readers, and communicators. By the end of the semester, everyone in this course should…

- Enhance their understanding of the central place of writing and communication in the learning process and in academic life.
- Learn strategies for analyzing, synthesizing, and responding to college-level readings.
- Improve their ability to communicate correctly and effectively in writing and in speech, taking into account audience and purpose.
- Become comfortable with writing as a process and learn strategies—for instance, prewriting, outlining, and revision—for working through that process.
- Learn appropriate use of the work of others and, where necessary, specific practices of citation.
- Learn to articulate oral arguments and to respond productively to arguments of others in formal presentations and in class discussion.

3. Okay, those are the "process" goals. But what about results? What does "good writing" mean in this course? How do I get A's on all my papers?

Beyond the process goals, we'll also have some goals that are focused on the actual writing you produce, particularly for the major writing assignments you'll complete in the course. These goals describe what you should aim for in every graded piece of writing you submit this semester. To make them easy to remember, I call them the 7 C's that describe effective academic writing: **clear, compelling, convincing, coherent and cohesive, fully contextualized while citing others appropriately**.

We'll spend quite a bit of time exploring what each of these criteria means and what exactly constitutes each one. But for now, if you're wondering what constitutes excellent writing in this course (and beyond this course), the kind of writing that will earn you an A on the graded writing assignments, know this: excellent academic writing is clear, compelling, convincing, fully contextualized, cohesive and coherent, and cites others appropriately.

Achieving writing that meets this criteria isn't easy for anyone, but you'll be able to get closer to this goal if you work on developing a real attention to language (your own and others') and an ability to reflect on how a writer's choices can affect a reader.

4. What are the major assignments? And what else contributes to our grade?

Here's how I'll assess whether you've mastered all of the learning goals above (the topic-based goals, the process-based goals, and the results-based goals) and what percentage of your overall grade each assignment or category counts for:

Graded Assignment #1: Brief personal narrative (15%) - For this assignment, you'll use James Joyce's "Araby" and/or Jamaica Kincaid's "Girl" as inspiration to write a brief (3+ page) descriptive narrative about a "growing pains" experience in the place where you grew up. This assignment will develop your ability to pay attention to language to make your writing more clear and compelling.

Graded Assignment #2: Thesis-driven literary analysis essay (25%) - For this assignment, you'll write a 4-6 page thesis-driven essay analyzing one of the assigned short stories in the class and develop an argument about what insights this story offers about the difficulties of growing up. You'll support your argument with textual evidence and analysis, offering a close read of the text.

Graded Assignment #3: Research paper (30%) - For this assignment you'll respond to scholarly arguments about Jane Austen's *Emma*, writing a 7-10 page paper that develops your own argument about what the novel suggests about growing up and/or how the novel challenges or complicates the traditional *bildungsroman*.

Graded Assignment #4: Film scene analysis (15%) - For this assignment, you'll describe in detail and offer a 4-6 page close "reading" of one scene from one of our assigned films. This assignment will allow you to work on your skills as a writer of descriptive, engaging prose while also offering you a chance to demonstrate your skills of close attention to the elements of film.

Process Work (10%) - Since a major part of this course will be emphasizing the writing process as a whole, you'll be submitting your pre-writing, rough drafts, and revisions leading up to the final draft. This process work will be graded for a completion (i.e. you get a 100 if you complete the assignment). Since the point of process work is to get you to work on and improve your essay over time, rather than at the last minute, *I don't accept any late process work. I also don't offer extensions for process work.* Late or missing process work will receive a zero.

Reading Responses (5%) - Another important requirement of this course will be closely reading and reflecting on our course readings. You'll submit online reading responses for almost every reading assignment. These will be graded for completion as well. Late reading responses will receive a 50. (Note: both process work and reading responses will always be due before the start of class, but I suggest you turn them in the night before.)

5. Is there a participation grade?

I'm not going to grade participation; I'm just going to expect it. You'll learn more and help your classmates learn more when you thoughtfully and attentively participate during class. This doesn't just mean talking a lot in class discussions (and in fact, sometimes it means the

opposite). It means showing up on time every day and actually listening to your professor and your peers, rather than pretending to listen; it means thoughtfully participating and staying on topic in small group or partner discussions; it means working thoughtfully and without distractions (i.e. looking at your phone, Facebook on your laptop, etc.) on whatever task we might be doing in class that day, including the email reflections I will periodically ask you to write during class; it means asking questions to help draw your peers' out on some topic. And finally, it means learning how to disagree with your peers in a kind, respectful, thoughtful way. We'll learn from our disagreements with each other—including your disagreements with me—but we have to make sure that in the process of disagreement we never forget to be polite, empathetic, and willing to give up the last word.

Note, though, that if a student is repeatedly late, or absent, or disengaged in class (for example, checking their phone during a class discussion), or dominating the discussion without allowing anyone else the opportunity to talk, I reserve the right to warn the student and take points off of his or her final average for each subsequent issue.

Your overall course grade at the end of the semester will be determined by this scale:

100-98 = A+	97-93 = A	92-90 = A-
89-88 = B+	97-83 = B	82-80 = B-
79-78 = C+	77-73 = C	72-70 = C-
69-60 = D	59-0 = F	

Note: I round up on .5 or higher. **Do not ask me to raise your grade at the end of the semester if you fell just short of the grade you wanted.**

7. Do you offer extra credit?

Yes, I offer multiple ways to get extra credit. (But don't ask me this question once the semester ends; by then it will be too late.) Throughout the semester, I'll occasionally offer bonus reading responses that will replace any late or missing reading responses you have. I understand that everyone gets busy some time and misses a deadline. (Note: these responses won't replace your process work—just your missing or late reading responses.) The most important and impactful extra credit I offer, though, is the chance to do one more revision on your first three graded papers. At the very end of the semester, you'll have the chance to submit new drafts of one, two, or all three of these papers. You can receive up to 3 more points on your grade for each assignment based on the quality and extent of your revision. Be sure to save your graded work, so that you can take this opportunity at the end of the semester.

Note: If you have enough time, I encourage you to do the optional revisions and extra credit reading responses even if you're already happy with your grade. These bonus assignments should be worthwhile and meaningful tasks on their own.

7. Do you have office hours? When? And where are they?

In the days leading up to each assignment's final due date, I'll hold office hours on multiple days, to give you a chance to come show me your paper and get feedback. These office hours will be held either at Brochstein Pavilion (i.e. the big class coffee shop that isn't as good or

affordable as Coffeehouse) or in the lobby just outside our classroom in the rec center. I'll announce in class and on Canvas the times and location whenever I hold office hours. For these meetings, you can come pull up a chair and join us even if I'm already meeting with someone else. They're group office hours. Maybe you'll learn from my conversation with someone else. Note, though, that I'll only be able to read one paragraph of your essay or answer one question at a time, so that I can give everyone feedback. Even if you only get to ask a couple questions, though, coming to office hours will make your work better.

Note: When I finish grading an assignment, I'll usually hold individual meetings that you can sign up for on Canvas, where I'll return your graded paper and we can discuss it in more detail. If you need or want to meet with me individually about anything else, you can always talk to me before or after class or email me to set up an appointment. I'm also happy to have coffee or lunch with students during the semester, if my schedule permits. Just ask!

8. If we have questions or want feedback on our work, can we email you? Also, what if we want to ask for an extension? Do you allow extensions?

If you have any questions, I'd always rather you ask me before, during, or after class. You can get an instant answer that way. (If your question is personal or sensitive, of course, I'd be happy to answer it by email or during a one-on-one appointment.) Likewise, if you want feedback on a paper-in-progress, it's better to ask me before, during, or after class, or during office hours. I don't offer feedback by email, since that requires me to do all the work on my end while you just wait for my response. Ask me your questions in person. I have a family, and although I can be a technology addict, I don't believe that it's good for human beings to check their email at all hours of the day and night. Ask me questions in person if at all possible! And if you do email me and don't get a response, ask me in person if I received it! (By the way, you can also try to catch me on my office phone if you have a pressing question: 713-343-4498.)

Although I *don't* offer extensions on process work or reading responses, I *do* offer extensions on your final draft. I want you to submit your best work for the final draft, even if we have to arrange a delayed deadline. Just ask me well in advance. And in person, preferably. However, if you submit a paper late without receiving an extension, you'll be docked one letter grade (10 points). You may also lose the chance to revise the paper at the end of the semester.

8. Where else can I get help on my writing or presentations this semester outside of class?

If you want more help from a trained writing consultant, then I strongly suggest you make an appointment with the Center for Academic and Professional Communication. Located on the second floor of Fondren Library, the CAPC offers individual appointments where you can meet with a helpful peer consultant who can give you feedback about your paper's argument, structure, and other key elements. Note, though, that they are not editors or proofreaders. Don't go there expecting them to "fix your grammar mistakes." But they can, for example, offer suggestions about patterns they see in your sentence structure or the coherence of your argument. And they also offer individual feedback on oral presentations! You can make an appointment at the CAPC's website: https://pwc.rice.edu/center-academic-and-professional-communication

11. Is it true that FWIS has a different policy regarding the Honor Code than other Rice classes?

Yes and no. It's true that one of the stated purposes of FWIS is to help first-year students understand the Rice Honor Code and, more explicitly, to teach students the rules of paraphrasing and scholarly attribution, and the appropriate uses of different types of evidence. Accordingly, FWIS instructors "take an educational approach" to transgressions of these rules and respond to errors in these areas as issues for grading and opportunities to correct errors, rather than as instances of academic dishonesty. Thus, if you fail to appropriately cite a source or use someone else's work in a questionable way, I might use it as a learning moment for you, though it still may affect your grade on that assignment (even to the point of receiving an F), but I wouldn't choose to make it an Honor Code violation.

At the same time, all FWIS instructors retain the authority to treat instances of repeat or egregious violations as matters for the attention of the Rice Honor Council. In this course, students are expected to do the actual writing of their assignments on their own, with no outside help from anyone else. However, students are strongly encouraged (and will sometimes be required) to collaborate on all other aspects of their coursework; including discussing assignments, reading each other's work, and making suggestions for editing and revision. In other words, your friends, your professor, and the CWOVC can all provide feedback on your work, but no one else should be telling you the exact words (or punctuation) to use or the exact choices to make. You're the writer. And you shouldn't be using any other writer's exact words or ideas without attribution, either. That's plagiarism.

12. What do I need to do if I have a documented disability?

Any student seeking academic adjustments or accommodations for a disability should speak to me during the first two weeks of class. All discussions will remain as confidential as possible. Additionally, students with disabilities will need to contact Disability Support Services in the Allen Center if they haven't already done so. And more generally, if there's anything I can do to help the classroom or learning experience for anyone in the class, at any point in the semester, please let me know. (Even if it's something that might be a criticism of my teaching, still let me know.)

13. Who can I talk to if I'm feeling really stressed or anxious at any point during the semester?

College can be stressful. If, for any reason at any point, you begin to feel that your stress level is affecting your personal well-being or mental health, and you'd like to talk to a a professional counselor, let me know and I'd be happy to help you get in touch with someone from Rice's Wellbeing or Counseling Center. You can also contact them directly through their websites. Here's the website for the Rice Counseling Center: https://wellbeing.rice.edu/counseling- center/contact-us (Look for the "contact us" or "set up an appointment" pages).

14. You haven't told us what books we need to buy for this class. Do we need to buy any books?

You're required to buy one book for this course: The Norton Critical Edition of Jane Austen's *Emma* (4th edition, which should be available at our bookstore). I also recommend

that you buy J.D. Salinger's *Franny and Zooey*, but it's not required. All of our other course readings will be provided as handouts or as PDFs on Canvas and all of the films assigned for this class will be available through Kanopy, the streaming service available to Rice students and staff through the library. Set up an account.

15. What are we doing each day in class? What's due and when?

Here's one of the most important parts—or possibly *the* most important part—of this syllabus: the course calendar. Keep up with all the due dates on this calendar. Note, though, that as the semester progresses I may change things—I usually do—so keep up with the latest version I post on Canvas, rather than just this printed version.

Monday January 13: Introduction to the course; review syllabus
Wednesday January 15: Before class, read Joyce's "Araby" and submit RR
Friday January 17: Before class, read Kincaid's "Girl" and submit RR

Monday January 20: No class; MLK holiday
Wednesday January 22: Before class, submit rough draft of Graded Assignment #1
Friday January 24: Before class, read Zinsser's "Simplicity and Clutter" and submit RR

Monday January 27: Before class, submit final draft of Graded Assignment #1
Wednesday January 29: Before class, read Salinger's "Franny" and submit RR
Friday January 31: Before class, read Packer's "Drinking Coffee Elsewhere" and submit RR

Monday February 3: Before class, read Hua's "On the Road at Eighteen" and Bass's "Juggernaut" and submit RR
Wednesday February 5: Before class, submit freewriting for GA#2
Friday February 7: Before class, submit rough draft of GA#2

Monday February 10: No homework; work on revising GA#2
Wednesday February 12: Before class, submit "Dress Rehearsal draft" of GA#2
Friday February 14: No class; spring recess

Monday February 17: Before class, submit final draft of GA#2
Wednesday February 19: Before class, read *Emma*, volume 1, chapters 1-7
Friday February 21: Before class, read Emma, volume 1, chapters 8-12

Monday February 24: Before class, finish *Emma* volume 1 (chapters 13-18)
Wednesday February 26: Before class, read *Emma* volume 2, chapters 1-9
Friday February 28: Before class, finish *Emma* volume 2 (chapters 10-18)

Monday March 2: Before class, read *Emma* volume 3, chapters 1- 6
Wednesday March 4: Before class, read *Emma* volume 3, chapters 7-13
Friday March 6: Before class, finish *Emma*

Monday March 9: Before class, read Kohn's "Reading *Emma* as a Lesson on Ladyhood: A Study in the Domestic Bildungsroman" and submit RR

Wednesday March 11: Before class, read at least two academic articles or book chapters related to Emma and submit RR
Friday March 13: Before class, submit first prewriting assignment for GA #3

Monday March 16 - Friday March 20: No classes; spring break

Monday March 23: Before class, submit second prewriting assignment for GA#3
Wednesday March 25: Before class, submit intro for GA#3
Friday March 27: Before class, submit intro and three body paragraphs for GA#3

Monday March 30: Before class, submit complete rough draft of GA#3
Wednesday April 1: No homework; work on revising GA#3
Friday April 3: Before class, submit "dress rehearsal draft" of GA#3

Monday April 6: Before class, submit final draft of GA#3
Wednesday April 8: Before class, watch *The 400 Blows*
Friday April 10: Before class, watch *Pather Panchali*

Monday April 13: Before class, watch *Lady Bird*
Wednesday April 15: Before class, watch *Eighth Grade*
Friday April 17: Before class, watch *Moonlight*

Monday April 20: Submit rough draft of GA#4
Wednesday April 22: Presentations
Friday April 24: No homework; end-of-course reflection

Wednesday May 6: Last day of finals; final draft of GA#4 and optional revisions due by NOON